



# Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

## Workshop #2 – Public Comments

April 5, 2007  
California Baptist University

### LAND USE RELATED ISSUES

- ♦ Question: How do you handle relocation of all the people who might be displaced as a part of this effort? Answer: This Plan is a guide for private development – it is not anticipated that any massive relocation effort will take place.
- ♦ What would happen to the current businesses along the corridor?
- ♦ We have been talking about mixed use for several years now. Are these examples of any mixed-use projects in Riverside? Haven't seen any mixed-use projects in cities with 100-degree summers. Answer: There are several new projects in the works, none have been completed. There are also older projects in the City that we don't currently think of as mixed-use but are working as such. In other "hot" cities such as Claremont, successful mixed-use projects can be found.
- ♦ The Plan document has language that indicates single-family residents will be replaced with student housing.
- ♦ Eminent domain is an issue - the belief is that a lot of residents will be displaced as a part of this Plan's recommendations.
- ♦ As a lifelong resident of Riverside and a business owner along Magnolia, while the Plan and its historic elements are appreciated - the question is whether this Plan will lead to the taking of individual properties?
- ♦ A business owner on Merrill expressed a concern regarding what is proposed for Merrill – 4-lane street. Staples has built their building right up to the street edge and now Merrill is being closed off to allow Staples to maintain their facility. The City should have known about the grade crossing and not permitted Staples to build where they did. Local businesses are being jeopardized at the expense of a national retailer.
- ♦ I own a property located at 11759 Magnolia Avenue in Councilwoman Harts' Ward. I am in the process of redeveloping that property, however you propose that it become BP zoning. It is only ½ acre and the surrounding properties are zoned commercial. I propose it should be the same C-3, and also please contact me to discuss this. Thank You.
- ♦ Larry did a slick, super fast presentation. Historical preservation and mixed-use on Magnolia Avenue sounds nice, like in old town Pasadena. The devil though, eminent domain, is in the details. I particularly worry when Larry says, "older and deteriorating" that sounds like redevelopment/ eminent domain to me. The Arroyo Group has some



classy ideas but the City Council favors big corporations over small businesses that give this city its charm and wealth. Smart Park, for example, is a way to run out small businesses for the national chains.

- ♦ Basically, I like the presentation. I like the idea of historic preservation and maintaining the landscaping along the avenue. I also do not mind the concept of the high density development. What I don't like is "developers", which as an experienced political office holder is just a polite name for "crooks". As a socialist, I would like the city to do and oversee any development so as to not allow these developers (crooks) to rip off individual citizens while they go after their "profits". I love 100° weather and I certainly don't mind taxes that are well used for the public good. Eminent Domain is for Public Good not for private profit!
- ♦ Presentation was too rapid in covering much information without enough detail. Mixed use village is going to ruin some of the existing neighborhoods, such as La Sierra. We can not move around now due to all the traffic on La Sierra Avenue. Why does the City of Riverside allow builders to build buildings just inches from existing sidewalks, such as the new building on the north east corner of Magnolia Avenue and La Sierra Avenue?

#### **TRANSPORTATION/ PARKING RELATED ISSUES**

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- ♦ Question: In some areas, six lanes are proposed – when will the 6 lanes be expanded to the rest of the corridor? Answer: With the feedback received at the General Plan community workshops, it was decided that Magnolia Avenue would not be expanded to six lanes beyond what already exists.
- ♦ Question: Is there anything in the Plan to change the railroad crossing already planned near Merrill Street? Answer: No. At this time, it is anticipated that the grade crossing will be completed in three years.
- ♦ Question: Where will the traffic be re-aligned during the rail crossing construction? Answer: Traffic will continue to flow and Magnolia will stay open.
- ♦ The rail grade crossing will cause untold problems.
- ♦ Magnolia Avenue over the years has become a humpback with repeated pavings - is there any plan to bring the street back down to grade?
- ♦ Question: Have you thought about parking along the corridor? Answer: The parking concepts contained in the plan are to create a nicer environment with parking hidden behind retail, and shared parking concepts.
- ♦ Parking District implementation will lead to additional taxes.
- ♦ What is shared parking?

#### **LANDSCAPING/ AESTHETIC RELATED ISSUES**

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- ♦ A Woods Street resident commented that she does not support the cobblestone median, and would like to keep painted median.
- ♦ Question: There are a lot of Eucalyptus trees in the Woods Street district - are those being kept or removed? Answer: Those trees are being retained.
- ♦ Are there any lighting changes proposed along the corridor?

- ♦ Question: Is there a timeline and grant availability for upgrading facades? Answer: The funding mechanisms available for a façade program include Redevelopment funds or CDBG grants.
- ♦ Magnolia Avenue on both sides of Van Buren has become very shabby and needs to become revitalized. Disagree with cobblestone in the median on Magnolia Avenue, this can make it difficult for elderly to walk on and can create law suits
- ♦ Thank you for the visual, I live in the Wood Streets and you answered all of the questions at the questions and answers portion of the workshop. Specific Plan sounds like a good start to be built upon in Riverside for our future. No zone changes from Jurupa to Ramona. New light standards should be implemented on Magnolia Avenue, such as the Raincrosses on Market Street towards the 60 freeway.
- ♦ Most people who attend these meetings are worried about what the city is going to do to their property. Overall the plan looks good! Most people didn't understand the overall plan because it went to fast. I suggest keeping zoning and keeping Magnolia Avenue looking good. I don't like the cobblestone median in the Wood Streets because dirt builds up and it looks bad. The City needs to bring Magnolia Avenue to grade, more specifically the hump in the avenue in Magnolia Center and the Wood Streets.

## **PEDESTRIAN RELATED ISSUES**

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- ♦ Question: When will the recommendations for improving the pedestrian-oriented environment in the Arlington District be completed? Answer: The Arlington business community is waiting for Van Buren widening to be completed before the other improvements take place.
- ♦ Central Avenue traffic changes mean that those who want to cross Magnolia Avenue from the residential area to the Blockbuster side can no longer cross the street with ease. This is contrary to the Specific Plan goal of creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.



## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION RELATED ISSUES**

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- ♦ Question: Is the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line similar to the Orange Line in Los Angeles with dedicated bus lanes? Answer: No, the BRT line here does not have dedicated bus lanes, it has fewer bus stops and hence faster travel times.
- ♦ Question: Is the BRT being coordinated with regard to the issue of the transit-dependent residents' access? With fewer stops, it may be harder for transit-dependent residents to use the system. Answer: The BRT is planned to supplement the local bus lines and hence should not have any negative impact on transit-dependent residents.
- ♦ Rapid Transit down Magnolia Avenue is a joke. The only time I drive Magnolia is when I have no other option; with the addition of thousands of new residents, Magnolia will be gridlocked 24-7. Pedestrian access is ridiculous. We have several months of 100° plus weather. This can be a fatal situation for seniors, the very young, and other sensitive

people. The plan will have little impact, already we have a big box Lowe's in the Arlington Historic Area.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

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- ♦ Question: In the presentation for the Magnolia Heritage District, it was mentioned that the district extends up to California Avenue while none of the plans shown go beyond Garfield. Please clarify? Answer: California Avenue runs parallel to Magnolia Avenue and is not within the Specific Plan area.
- ♦ The presentation only covers highlights, not details. The Plan was not provided in advance for residents to review and be able to respond and comment at this meeting. The Plan was only posted the night before. There are a lot of details in the Plan that have not been presented here. Response: Comment cards are available for the public to review
- ♦ Keep the Dairy Queen on Magnolia - it is historic.
- ♦ Some of the comments tonight are outside the consultant's scope.
- ♦ Despite the vehemence with which certain individuals defend the status quo of Riverside, especially this corridor, the far reaching vision with which this plan has been conceived is admirable. To those who illogically fear that they will lose something let them know that their fear (likely blighted) sacrifice will ultimately make the City of Riverside better than what it is. Greatness is imminent; forge ahead; you have the knowledge and the vision, not they.
- ♦ The plan for Magnolia Center should include a commitment to support local business!
- ♦ Limit each person's time.

### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED BY PLANNING STAFF**

Additional public comments received by Planning Staff will be posted as and when they are received.

**Received:** Sunday, April 15, 2007 7:26 PM

The following comments refer to the Magnolia Center and Wood Streets sections of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan. Also please notify me of the meetings to be held this summer.

1) Any "landscaped plaza" in the two triangular-shaped lots at Magnolia/Central/Brockton should be designed to eliminate homeless people sleeping there. Right now, several people sleep throughout the neighborhood and your plan should not create more places. An alternate idea might be a citrus corner to match the navel orange area with maybe varieties invented at UCR or a water conservation garden like the one at the Metropolitan Museum.

2) Do not create a Parking District at Magnolia Center. This same strategy is driving business away from the downtown area. A parking district would discourage people from shopping in the Center and encourage people to park in the neighborhoods instead of the commercial areas.

3) Do not put high density residential in the Wood Streets or Magnolia Center (one such area is planned at Brockton and Merrill). Increasing the commercial activity and pedestrian uses at the plaza and through Magnolia Center will increase pressure on the neighborhoods. The disadvantages of high density residential should not be added to compound the problem.

4) Support LOCAL Business. In the plan, specifically state a commitment to local businesses. Part of the historical charm of the area is that it supported local business people. The current plan rezones or redesigns the areas that include Pepito's, Kuma Tire, Frigaard Chiropractic, Magnolia Brake and Alignment, Bpb's Auto and the other businesses at Magnolia and Jurupa. The railroad underpass is sending Elliotts' for Pets, Porsche Specialized Services and numerous local businesses nearby. RESTORE commitment to local business people. I do not want to live in the historic Wood Streets accompanied by cookie-cutter strip mall looking flat front commercial buildings. I would much rather the area look like Redland's State Street.

5) Require Staples to improve the facades that front Magnolia and Merrill. The banner/signs inside the windows are tacky and the blank windows are worse. I suggest something like the historical prints at Starbucks in the Loews Center.

6) Require Kawa Market at Magnolia and Bandini to install ballards to prevent parking driving and parking on their lot. The store owners manage the store quietly and are good neighbors in the area, but the store atmosphere could be improved.

7) A stamped concrete median is not historical. The one by RCC looks forlorn and just collects trash. Money would be better spent maintaining the street markers and installing better designed street light standards.